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out of fashion. On all sides there was a general revulsion to the Clearing-up. The reaction of Scottish philosophy against Hume ran out, and Hume has been continued in Hamilton, Mansel, Spencer, Bain, Lewes, and Mill. Natural science under Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, and others in England; Comte and his school in France; Helmholtz, Buechner, Haeckel, and others in Germany have gone back to D'Holbach's materialism, "What we know by our senses alone has reality," and to Laplace's atheism, "Nature has no need of the hypothesis of a God." In morals the same negative movement is carried on by Grote, Mill, Lecky, and Buckle; and in religion by Baur, Feuerbach, Strauss, Renan, Colenso, and Matthew Arnold. The foregoing names are taken at random as having a certain prominence, but the spirit of the Clearing-up saturates modern writers of all classes; we noted at the outset its distinct expression in Macaulay.

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## THE HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

[TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF F. W. J. VON SCHELLING; BEING THE EIGHTH LECTURE "ON THE METHOD OF UNIVERSITY STUDY" (AKADEMISCHEN STUDIUM).]

BY ELLA S. MORGAN.

The real sciences, in general, can be separated or particularized from the absolute or ideal sciences only by the historical element in them. But Theology, besides this general relation to history, has still another, which is altogether peculiar to it, and belongs specially to the nature of theology.

Since it, as the true center of the objective realization of philosophy, deals chiefly in speculative ideas, it is also the highest synthesis of philosophical and historical knowing; and to demonstrate this is the chief object of the following remarks.

I base the historical relation of Theology not alone upon

this: that the first origin of all religion, as of every other knowledge and culture, is conceivable only as derived from the instruction of superior personages — hence all religion in its first form was tradition; for, as regards the other current modes of explanation, some of which make the first idea of God or gods arise from fear, gratitude, or some other emotion, while others make them originate through a crafty invention of the first law-givers. However, it may be that the former conceive the idea of God only as a psychological phenomenon, and the latter neither explain how it ever occurred to any one to make himself the law-giver of a people, nor how he came to use religion, in particular, as a means of exciting fear without having already received the idea from some other source. Foremost among the multitude of false, senseless attempts of modern times are the so-called histories of mankind, which take their conceptions of the primitive condition of the race from descriptions compiled by travelers of the rude traits of barbarous nations, which, consequently, play a distinguished part in such histories. There is no condition of barbarism which has not come from the ruins of a former civilization. It is reserved to the future efforts of history to show how even those peoples, who live in a condition of barbarism, are peoples torn from their relation with the rest of the world by revolutions, and are partly remnants of nations; who, deprived of communication and the means of culture already attained, have fallen back into their present state. I consider the civilized condition undoubtedly the first condition of the human race, and the first establishment of states, science, religion, and the arts as simultaneous, or, rather, as one and the same; so that they were not really separated, but were in most perfect interpenetration, as they will be again in the final perfection of the race.

Neither is the historical relation of theology alone dependent on the fact that the particular forms of Christianity, in which religion exists with us, can only be known historically.

The absolute relation of theology is that in Christianity the world is looked upon as history, as the realm of morals, and that this general intuition constitutes its fundamental character.

This is seen most completely in contrast with the religion of ancient Greece. If I do not mention the older religions, especially the Indian, it is because, in this relation, it forms no contrast — without, however, in my opinion, being in unity with it. The necessary limits of the present investigation do not allow a complete exposition of this view, hence we shall only mention or allude to it incidentally. The mythology of the Greeks was a perfect world of symbols of ideas, which can be perceived realistically only as gods. Pure limitation on the one side, and undivided absoluteness on the other, is the determining law of each particular divinity, as well as of the world of gods as a whole. The infinite was seen only in the finite, and in this manner even subordinated to the finite. The gods were creatures of a higher nature, abiding, unchangeable shapes. Very different is the condition of a religion which is concerned immediately with the infinite itself, in which the finite is not conceived as symbol of the infinite, and at the same time for its own sake, but is conceived only as an allegory of the infinite, and in perfect subordination to it. The whole, in which the ideas of such a religion become objective, is necessarily itself an infinite, not a world finished and limited on all sides; the shapes are not abiding, but transitory; not eternal beings of nature, but historic forms in which the divine nature is only revealed transitorily, and whose fleeting appearance can only be held fast by faith, but can never become transformed into an absolute presence.

Where the infinite itself can become finite, there it can also become many; there polytheism is possible. Where the infinite is only expressed in the finite, it remains necessarily one, and no polytheism is possible except a co-existence of divine forms. Polytheism arises from a synthesis of absoluteness with limitation, so that in the same neither absoluteness, according to form, nor limitation is canceled. In a religion like Christianity this cannot be taken from nature, for it does not conceive the finite as symbol of the infinite, and with independent significance. Consequently, Christianity can be taken only from what falls in time — that is, from history; and, hence, Christianity is, in the highest sense and in its innermost

spirit, historical. Every particular moment of time is a revelation of a particular side of God, in each of which He is absolute: that which the Greek religion had as co-existent, Christianity has as a succession, although the time for the separation of the manifestations, and with it of receiving definite shape, is not yet come.

It has been already pointed out that nature and history are related as the real and ideal unities; and in the same way the Greek and the Christian religions are related — in the latter of which the divine principle has ceased to reveal itself in nature, and is recognized only in history. Nature is, in general, the sphere of potentiality of things, in which, by virtue of the reflection of the infinite into the finite, things, as symbols of ideas, have also a life independent of their significance. Hence God, in nature, becomes exoteric — the ideal appears through another than itself, through a being; but only in so far as this being is taken for the essence, the symbol independent of the idea, is the divine truly exoteric, but according to the idea it is esoteric. In the ideal world — hence in history particularly — the divine unveils itself and is the open mystery of the divine kingdom.

As in the sensuous images of nature, the intellectual world of Greek poetry lay as if imprisoned in a bud, obscure in its object and inarticulate in subject.

Christianity, on the contrary, is the revealed mystery, and is in its nature esoteric, as heathenism is in its nature exoteric.

Hence the whole relation of Nature and the ideal world had to be changed, and, as Nature, was revealed in Heathenism, while the ideal world, in Christianity, was withdrawn to the realm of mystery; and, in proportion as the ideal world became revealed, Nature recedes and becomes a secret. To the Greeks, Nature was in itself divine, for even their gods were not beyond or above Nature. To the modern world, Nature was a secret, for it did not comprehend Nature in and for itself, but only as the visible image of the unseen and spiritual world. The most active phenomena of Nature — as for instance, those of electricity and of bodies in a state of chemical change — were scarcely known to the ancients, or at least excited none of the

enthusiasm with which they are regarded in the modern world. The highest religious feeling, expressed in Christian mysticism, holds the secret of Nature and the incarnation of God for one and the same.

In the system of transcendental idealism I have already shown that we must accept three periods of history, that of Nature, of Fate, and of Providence. These three ideas express the same identity, but in different ways. Fate is also providence, as recognized in the world of real things; so also providence is fate, but seen in ideal things. The eternal necessity reveals itself in Time in identity with it as Nature, where the conflict between the infinite and the finite still remains concealed in the common germ of the finite. This was the case in the most flourishing time of Greek religion and poetry. With the revolt from Nature the eternal necessity was manifested in fate, thus entering on the real conflict with Freedom. This was the close of the ancient world, whose history, therefore, may be considered, on the whole, as the tragic period. The modern world begins with a universal "Fall of Man," a revolt of man from Nature. This identification with Nature is not sin so long as it is unconscious of the contrary; it may rather be called "the Golden Age." Consciousness of it destroys innocence, and, hence, immediately demands reconciliation and voluntary submission, in which Freedom comes out of the battle both conqueror and conquered. This conscious reconciliation — which takes the place of unconscious identity with Nature and of the conflict with Fate, and restores unity on a higher plane — is expressed in the idea of Providence. Hence Christianity, in history, introduces this period of Providence as the prevailing mode of viewing the world — a mode which looks upon the world as history and as ruled by Providence.

This is the great historical tendency of Christianity; this is the reason that the science of religion, in Christianity, is inseparable from history — is, indeed, one and the same with it. This synthesis with history, without which Theology itself cannot even be conceived, presupposes, on the other hand, the higher Christian view of history.

The contrast which is commonly drawn between History and Philosophy exists only so long as History is conceived as a series of accidental occurrences, or as mere empirical necessity. The former is the vulgar theory, to which the other is supposed to be superior, but its limitations are equally narrow. History also proceeds from an eternal unity, and has its roots in the absolute, like Nature or any other object of cognition. The contingency of events and actions seems, to the common understanding, to be founded on the contingent nature of individuals. But, I ask, What, then, is this or that individual, but that which has carried out this or that particular action? There can be no other conception of the individual; hence, if the action is necessary, so is the individual. That which, even from a low stand-point, is free, and consequently objective, can appear as accidental in all action — is merely that the individual takes for his deed what is already determined and necessary; but for the rest, and as regards the consequence, it is, for good or for evil, the instrument of absolute necessity.

Empirical necessity is nothing but a device for prolonging the reign of chance by infinite postponement of necessity. If we allow this kind of necessity in Nature to be valid only for the phenomenon, then how much more must it be allowed in history? What intelligent person will persuade himself that events like the development of Christianity, the migration of nations, the crusades, and so many other great events, had their real origin in the causes generally assigned to them? And, even if these were really the controlling ones, they are in this relation again only the instruments of an eternal order of things.

What is true of history in general is specially true of the history of religion, namely, that it is founded in an eternal necessity, and, hence, that a logical deduction of it is possible, by means of which it is closely and intimately one with the science of religion.

The historical logical deduction of Christianity can begin only from one point — that of the universal view that the world, in so far as it is history, necessarily appears to be specialized

from two sides, and this contrast, which the modern world makes against the old, is sufficient to explain the nature and all special peculiarities of Christianity. The ancient world is in so far the nature side of history as its prevailing unity or idea is the being of the infinite in the finite. The close of ancient and the beginning of modern times, whose dominant principle is the infinite, could only be brought about when the true infinite came into the finite—not to deify it, but to sacrifice God in His own person, and thus to reconcile the finite and infinite. Hence the great idea of Christianity is God incarnate in man—Christ as the summit and finality of the ancient world of gods. He makes finite in Himself the divine, but He does not take on humanity in its highest, but in its lowest, estate, and He stands there as the dividing limit of the two worlds decreed from eternity, although a transitory phenomenon in Time. He Himself returns into the invisible realm, promising instead of Himself, not the principle which, coming into the finite, remains finite, but the spirit—the ideal principle which leads the finite back to the infinite, and is thus the light of the modern world.

All other characteristics of Christianity are connected with this first idea. The presentation of the unity of the infinite and finite objectively by means of symbols, like the Greek religion, is impossible in the ideal tendency of Christianity. All symbolism belongs to the subjectivity; hence the solution of the contradiction which is visible internally, not externally, remains a mystery, a secret. The everywhere-present antinomy of the divine and the natural is canceled only through the subjective requirement in an incomprehensible manner to think both as one. Such a subjective unity is expressed in the definition of a miracle. The origin of every idea, according to this conception, is a miracle, because it arises in time without having a relation to time. No miracle can take place in a temporal manner; it is the absolute—that is, it is God Himself who is revealed in the miracle, and, consequently, the idea of revelation is absolutely necessary in Christianity.

A religion which exists as poetry in the race has as little need of an historical basis as nature—always open and

revealed — has of religion. Where the divine principle does not live in permanent forms, but passes away in fleeting appearances, it needs some means by which to hold them, and needs tradition to perpetuate them. Besides the mysteries peculiar to religion, there must be a mythology which is the exoteric side of religion, and which is founded on religion, as, conversely, the religion of the former kind was founded on mythology.

The ideas of a religion which is directed to the contemplation of the infinite in the finite must be expressed especially in being. The ideas of a religion founded on the perception of the finite in the infinite — in which all symbolism belongs only to the subject — can become objective alone through action. The original type of all contemplation of God as a moral agent (*durch Handeln*) is history, but this is endless, immeasurable; hence it must be represented by a progressive manifestation — eternal, and at the same time limited, which, again, is not real, like the State, but is ideal, and presents as in the immediate present the union of all in spirit with particularized existence in an individual as an immediate presence. This symbolic perception of God is the Church as a living work of art.

Now, as the moral agency (*Handeln*), which externally expresses the unity of the infinite and the finite, may be called symbolic, so the same considered internally, as mystic and mysticism, is a subjective symbolism. If the utterances of this mode of view have at most times met with contradiction and persecution in the Church, it is because they attempted to make the esoteric of Christianity exoteric; not because the inner spirit of this religion is opposed to the spirit of that mode of view.

If the actions and customs of the Church are to be considered as objectively symbolic, whose meaning is to be taken mystically, we may at least say that those ideas of Christianity which were symbolized in its dogmas have not ceased to be of purely speculative importance, their symbols having attained none of the life independent of their meaning, which the symbols of the Greek mythology had.

The reconciliation of the finite as lapsed from God, thorough His own birth into finite life, is the first thought of Christianity, and the completion of its whole view of the world and its history is stated in the idea of the Trinity, which, for that very reason, is simply necessary. It is well known that Lessing, in his "Education of the Human Race," endeavored to disclose the philosophic meaning of this doctrine, and what he says of it is, perhaps, the deepest speculative of his writings. But his theory fails to connect this idea with the history of the world, to wit, in this point: that the eternal Son of God, born of the essence of the Father of all things, is the finite itself, as it exists in the eternal intuition of God, and which appears as a suffering God, subject to the vicissitudes of time; who, at the summit of His manifestation in Christ, closes the finite world and reveals the infinite, or the supremacy of the Spirit.

If it were permissible in the present plan to go further into the historical deduction of Christianity, we should, in the same way, recognize the necessity of all the contrasts between Christianity and Heathenism, as well as the predominant ideas and subjective symbols of ideas. It is sufficient for me to have shown the possibility in general. If Christianity, not only in itself, but in its most eminent forms, is historically necessary, and if we connect the higher view of history itself as an issue from the eternal necessity, then we have given the possibility of conceiving Christianity historically as a divine and absolute phenomenon, and, consequently, a truly historical science of religion or of theology.